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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0861

INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4087

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 4357

RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 9440

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2340

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3745

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9418

RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0287

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1091

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000798

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR SCA/INS, PRM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2016

TAGS: PREF PHUM NP

SUBJECT: RESIDENT TIBETANS APPEAL FOR HUMANITARIAN  
CONSIDERATION ON RESETTLEMENT CRITERIA

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Poor Situation for Resident Tibetans

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¶1. (C) On March 23, A.G. Tashi, the Dalai Lama's Representative for Tashi Palkhiel and Dhorpatan Tibetan Settlements near Pokhara in western Nepal, visited the Embassy, with instructions from the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to draw attention to key issues facing Tibetan residents in Nepal, and to present a petition for special humanitarian consideration for resettlement criteria.

Tashi explained that he represented two camps in Pokhara established by the Swiss in 1962. The two camps and surrounding settlement had 827 Tibetan refugees who faced difficulties due to lack of security and the poor economy, both stemming from the Maoist insurgency, and lack of government services. He noted that 95 of 174 families at Tashi Palkhiel Camp had no toilet or bathroom and shared 14 public toilets. The Dhorpatan settlement of 46 families was more remote, with people having to walk four days from the roadhead to reach the camp. The camp had no means of communication, no electricity, no school, no health or sanitation facilities, and the only source of income was potato cultivation. He commented that Maoists often harassed and extorted the Tibetans in the Dhorpatan camp.

Resettlement Criteria

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¶2. (C) Tashi presented the Embassy with a petition, which he also sent separately to Kathleen Thompson, Director Office of Refugee Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security, requesting special humanitarian considerations as the United States developed resettlement criteria for the 5,000 Tibetans from Nepal earmarked for refugee admission to the United States in FY 2006. Tashi explained that the CTA had instructed him to petition the U.S. government to give priority to Tibetans without status in Nepal, including 19 families, consisting of 93 people, who were living "scattered around" the Tashi Palkhiel Settlement but were not registered as camp members. These refugees arrived in Nepal between 1986 and 2000 and had no residency permits or prospects of

obtaining official status in Nepal. The CTA's second priority were Mustang members (Tibetans who had helped the U.S. during the Vietnam War), and third were members of remote camps, such as the two he represented. However, Tashi noted that Tibetan refugee NGOs had requested that he petition the U.S. to prioritize a) all Tibetans in Nepal; b) at least one person from each Tibetan family in Nepal; and then c) people without status. Emboff explained that Washington was still determining the selection criteria, and promised to convey Tashi's proposed priorities to Washington.

However, she noted that dialogue over the resettlement program was ongoing with HMGN, which was under pressure from China. She added that neither HMGN nor the U.S. wanted to set criteria that would create a pull effect of new Tibetan refugees coming to Nepal.

New Residency Cards Needed

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¶3. (C) Tashi gave the Embassy a list of names of the children of Nepal residency card holders in the two camps who had turned eighteen since the government last issued residency cards in 1995. He noted that without government issued residency cards, it was difficult for Tibetans to go to school, seek work, or even register a cellphone or a motorcycle in their name. Emboff suggested Tashi also meet with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to get their assistance in pressing HMGN for residency cards. Emboff noted that UNHCR had submitted to His Majesty's Government of Nepal a list of names of children of residency card holders who needed residency cards in November 2004 but was still waiting for a reply, despite continued reminders from the United States and others. Emboff stated that the U.S. would continue to work with UNHCR to press HMGN to issue

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residency cards.

Comment

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¶4. (C) Post will continue to press the government to issue residency cards. Of the approximately 20,000 Tibetans resident in Nepal, about 5,000 have turned 18 since the government last issued residency cards in 1995. Essentially, a generation of Tibetan youth is growing up in Nepal without the status that would enable them to lead a normal life.

MORIARTY